



For Immediate Release

May 08, 2023

Chronic Wasting Disease Discovered in Deer Breeding Facility in Sutton County

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) received confirmation of a new case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a deer breeding facility in Sutton County. This case marks the first detection of the disease in the county.

The four-year-old white-tailed buck was detected using antemortem (live-animal) testing to determine if the animal was eligible for transfer to a registered release site.

The samples submitted to the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) in College Station were ultimately confirmed as “CWD detected” by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa. Officials took immediate action to secure deer at the facility.

Initial investigations indicate 10 additional breeding facilities and 18 release sites may have been impacted from previous transfers received from deer that originated in the Sutton County facility. TPWD and TAHC plan to continue working together to conduct additional investigations into the extent of the disease.

CWD has an incubation period that can span years, meaning the first indication in a herd may likely come through testing rather than observed clinical signs. Early detection and proactive monitoring improve the state’s response time to a disease outbreak and can greatly reduce the risk of further disease spread. Antemortem testing provides a continuous testing baseline that can further clarify the epidemiological uncertainties related to the origin of a disease outbreak. In addition to postmortem testing and other surveillance requirements, this testing helps guide future changes to the disease management strategy.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease found in certain cervids including deer, elk, moose and other members of the deer family. This slow and progressive disease may not produce visible signs in susceptible species for several years after infection. As the disease progresses, animals with CWD may show changes in behavior and appearance. Clinical signs may include progressive weight loss, stumbling or tremors with a lack of coordination, loss of appetite, teeth grinding, abnormal head posture and/or drooping ears, and excessive thirst, salivation or urination.

In Texas, the disease was first discovered in 2012 in free-ranging mule deer along a remote area of the Hueco Mountains near the Texas-New Mexico border. CWD has since been detected in Texas captive and free-ranging cervids, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, red deer, and elk. For more information on previous detections in Texas, visit TPWD’s [CWD page](#).



To date there are no known cases where CWD has infected a human, but recent research suggests that CWD transmission from infected animals to humans should not be ruled out. As a precaution, it is recommended that hunters test harvested cervid species for CWD and not consume the meat of infected animals.

For more information about CWD, visit the [TPWD website](#) or the [TAHC website](#).

###